Strategy Research Project

Is the Army Communicating Effectively in Today's Information Environment?

by

Colonel Josslyn L. Aberle
United States Army

United States Army War College
Class of 2013

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
xx-03-2013	STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT	

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Is the Army Communicating Effectively in Today's Information Environment?	
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Colonel Josslyn L. Aberle	
United States Army	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
Ms. Carol A. Kerr	
Public Affairs Office	

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
U.S. Army War College	
122 Forbes Avenue	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
Carlisle, PA 17013	

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Word Count: 7,090

14. ABSTRACT

During the past decade, Internet-based communication, particularly social media has made a dramatic impact on the information environment and revolutionized the practice of journalism, and the news media industry. While the news industry adapted to, and continues to evolve to meet the demands of the changing information environment, and is embracing social media as a critical tool for journalism, the Army has yet to comprehend how this fundamental shift in the information environment impacts its communication operations. In order to remain credible, relevant, and effective in the current Internet and social media based information environment, Army Public Affairs, like the news media, must adapt to the innovations embraced by the people with whom the Army must engage. Adapting to change will require the Army, and Army Public Affairs, to undertake a rapid and fundamental shift in the education, training, and resourcing of its Public Affairs career field, personnel and operations to effectively engage in the rapidly expanding Internet and social media based news industry. Without significant changes in Army Public Affairs operations, training and doctrine, the Army's continued culture of engagement is in jeopardy.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Social Media, Army Public Affairs, Facebook, Twitter

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU	UU	36	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(Include area code)*

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Is the Army Communicating Effectively in Today's Information Environment?

by

Colonel Josslyn L. Aberle
United States Army

Ms. Carol A. Kerr
Public Affairs Office
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

Title: Is the Army Communicating Effectively in Today's Information
                    Environment?

Report Date: March 2013

Page Count: 36

Word Count: 7,090

Key Terms: Social Media, Army Public Affairs, Facebook, Twitter

Classification: Unclassified

During the past decade, Internet-based communication, particularly social media has

made a dramatic impact on the information environment and revolutionized the practice

of journalism, and the news media industry. While the news industry adapted to, and

continues to evolve to meet the demands of the changing information environment, and

is embracing social media as a critical tool for journalism, the Army has yet to

comprehend how this fundamental shift in the information environment impacts its

communication operations. In order to remain credible, relevant, and effective in the

current Internet and social media based information environment, Army Public Affairs,

like the news media, must adapt to the innovations embraced by the people with whom

the Army must engage. Adapting to change will require the Army, and Army Public

Affairs, to undertake a rapid and fundamental shift in the education, training, and

resourcing of its Public Affairs career field, personnel and operations to effectively

engage in the rapidly expanding Internet and social media based news industry. Without

significant changes in Army Public Affairs operations, training and doctrine, the Army's

continued culture of engagement is in jeopardy.

Is the Army Communicating Effectively in Today's Information Environment?

It was late in the afternoon on a Spring day in early April 2003. Baghdad had

fallen, and Saddam Hussein was on the run. The 4th (Mechanized) Infantry Division (4th

ID) had received the order to cross the border of Kuwait into Iraq early the next morning

to begin movement north to Tikrit, Iraq. With less than 12 hours remaining before the

Division's Soldiers started rolling into Iraq, General Tommy Franks, Commander of

United States Central Command and Coalition Forces Iraq, ordered the 4th ID

Commander to embed Geraldo Rivera, a journalist working for the FOXNews network,

into the division's headquarters for its deployment into Iraq. As the Public Affairs Officer

for the 4th ID, I was responsible to transport the journalist, his crew and equipment from

the press camp headquarters in Kuwait City to the unit's staging base located two hours

north of the city in the desert along the Iraqi border. When I arrived, Geraldo Rivera had

five large vehicles full of equipment and a crew of 13. After a period of intense

negotiation, by the time we left Kuwait City to link-up with the 4th ID, he had reduced his

equipment and crew to two large, suburban-type vehicles, heavily loaded with

equipment, and a crew of four: the absolute minimum required equipment and back-up

systems to produce a live satellite television broadcast in the austere environment of the

Iraq desert.[1] In contrast, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) announced in 2012

that it was in the process of creating a new software application (app) that would allow

its reporters in the field to file photos, audio and video from an iPhone or iPad directly

into the news organization's data filing system. The app would also allow reporters to

broadcast live from an iPhone using only a 3G signal.[2]

Today's lightning- speed information environment and the rise of empowering

internet-based tools and social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook with

which news gathering has become an interactive process, has led to global change, supported significant shifts in ideologies, and sparked an ongoing rethink in how news consumers absorb and process information, and what this change might mean for the future.[3] The tempo of military operations as well as sophistication and agility of moving information and imagery around the globe using the Internet and social media have made possible an insatiable appetite for information. The social media environment is ubiquitous, all-pervasive and competitive. Willingly or otherwise, we are currently operating within it. Anecdotal evidence shows "conversations" about organizations occur through social media irrespective of whether or not the organization maintains an official social media presence. Defense forces worldwide are becoming aware of the risks of this environment; however, the majority fails to exploit fully the possible benefits and opportunities.[4] There is an urgent operational requirement to address social media engagement.

During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. commanders observed the enemy using social media via the Internet that was used to amplify propaganda effects of suicide attacks and other violence and recognized a need to counter and pre-empt the enemy's messaging. Robert Gates, then Secretary of Defense, shared this view in a speech at Kansas State University in 2007, "It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaida is better at communicating its message on the Internet than America," he said. "Speed, agility and cultural relevance are not terms that come readily to mind when discussing U.S. strategic communications."[5]

In order to remain credible, relevant, and effective in the current Internet and social media based information environment, Army Public Affairs, like the news media,

must adapt to the innovations embraced by the people with whom the Army must engage. The premise of this paper is that adapting to change will require the Army, and Army Public Affairs, to undertake a rapid and fundamental shift in the education, training, and resourcing of its Public Affairs career field, personnel and operations to effectively engage in the rapidly expanding Internet and social media based news industry. To serve as a guide to effect this change, this paper first explores the significant implications of social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, on the practice of journalism and the news media industry. Next, it reviews the current state of academic and experience-based development of public affairs practitioners as well as the current status of equipment and funding available to the career field. Finally, the paper assesses the gaps between current capabilities, in terms of skills, equipment, funding, and requirements necessary to meet Army objectives to effectively leverage contemporary social media platforms in a timely manner so as to engage the Army's audiences within today's time sensitive news cycle.

Web-based changes in the global information environment have changed how news consumers behave which, in turn, has changed the Army's operational information environment.

Today's technology and the Internet are replacing traditional news mediums. Access to a computer or mobile device with Internet access allows consumer to go directly to the original source of the news with only the news source and a link. And more often than not, the original source is not a staff journalist from a newspaper or news wire services such as the Associated Press.[6] The source is likely a freelance reporter or an average citizen, snapping photos and video of newsworthy events on a

cell phone as they unfold. To appreciate this change in the news industry, one only

needs to examine how the Internet infrastructure linked to cellular phone networks and

social media has opened access to non-government controlled media in Iran. A Reuters

or New York Times foreign bureau outpost staffed by journalists in Iran is not needed.

Whereas the mainstream media have been sidelined by officials in the country and not

able to report, the Tehran Bureau, published by volunteers out a small suburban house

in Massachusetts, has been able to report accurate and detailed information about what

is going on in Iran. Its information is being quoted and "reported" by the mainstream

media unable to get coverage.[7]

Changes in the news domain are linked to exponential growth in the penetration

and use of the Internet, worldwide. The growth in Internet use from 2000 to 2012

increased over 500 percent.[8] Internationally, the number of Internet users rose from 1.8

billion in 2009 to 2.4 billion (approximately 34 percent of the world's population), as of

June 2012. In the past 10 years Internet-based communication has been fully integrated

into the global culture, culture, becoming a primary means of communication for over a

billion people and an integral part of the global economy. Concurrently, as the internet

supported increasingly interactive information sharing, the phenomenon of social media

leveraged the web for sharing within a community.

Facebook and Twitter are also experiencing the same incredible growth as the

Internet. In March of 2011, there were over 664, Facebook users in the world. Within a

year, Facebook registered over 171million new users, and as of March 2012 grew to

over 835 million users. Current growth projections by Facebook estimate its presence

will reach one billion users within the next two years.[9] If user population was counted as

a state, the "Facebook nation" would qualify as the third largest "country" in the world after China and India.

Meanwhile, tweeting is becoming main stream and Twitter reported approximately 500 million registered profiles by March 2012, almost 108 million in the USA alone. Collectively, Twitter users sent an average of over 340 million tweets, and request over 1.6 billion search queries per day.[10] In September of 2011, Twitter had posted 33 billion tweets, according to the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project's Twitter usage studies. While the percentage of adults using Twitter remained steady from 2011 to 2012 with 15 percent of online adults now using Twitter, the proportion of online adults who use Twitter on a typical day has doubled since May 2011 and quadrupled since late 2010.[11]

As mobile and digital based communication tools become more easily assessable and affordable, social media and Internet communication is likely to dominate the global information environment. Linked to this dominance, the growth in web-based news providers has resulted in an explosion of consumer choices in the kinds of news available. No longer dependent on traditional television, radio or print journalism, today's news is mobile, interactive and can be personalized to fit ones preferences. There is an almost inexhaustible menu of options of types and sources of news. Every Internet browser window and search engine has an RSS news feed that can be customized on a user's homepage such as Bing's MSN and Google News. Blog aggregators like The Huffington Post or Global Voices Online.org, which consolidate news articles and top-profiled bloggers from around the world, have more than doubled the number of reporters in the last year, hiring those discarded by mainstream media

creating their own reporting and commentary networks.[12] Television shows like Comedy Central's John Stewart Show, that averages approximately 2.3 million viewers, are dominated by a young demographic who turns to sources like these for news. Through ITunes, satellite radio and television subscription services such as Apple TV and digital entertainment distribution companies including Netflix, Hulu and Google+, consumers can design an entire entertainment playlist of favorites, bypassing traditional radio and television.

Local news is also going mobile. Nearly half of American adults and 70 percent of 18-29 year olds report that they get at least some local news and information on their cell phone or tablet computer. People who get local news on their mobile devices feel they can have a bigger impact on their communities, are more likely than others to feel more plugged in to the media environment then they did a few years ago, and are more likely to use social media.[13]

Today, the digital information environment is permeated by the use of Internet and satellite-based communications and portable and hand-held digital communication devices including cell and "smart" phones, tablets, e-readers and notebook computers. As smart technology becomes cheaper and replaces traditional cell phones, the information environment will continue to experience exponential growth. Pressure on traditional news organizations predates the rise of the Internet, but the pressures have multiplied as consumer's behavior forces layers upon layers of change. The news industry in the second half of the 20th century responded to a series of technological changes, coinciding with bottom-line squeezes from rising manpower production costs. The rise of cable television introduced a new level of competition within network news.

After years of radio consolidation for efficiencies, satellite radio introduced a new level

of competition for the same audiences. Media companies have had to change their

theory of business in order to remain competitive in today's market place. Businesses

can collapse if their theory of business-assumptions a business is based on, including

customers, competitors, values and behavior, technology and dynamics-is not revised

to keep up with the changing market place.[14]

From the printing press to computers, technology has always shaped how

journalists perform their craft and where the public turns for information.[15] Social media

has revolutionized the information environment and how the public is accessing

information, which in turn has forced an evolutionary shift in the news industry. Hyper-

competition, economic imperatives and the public's rapid adoption of new media have

fueled the use and innovation of social media throughout news media organizations.

The exponential growth in use of social media platforms Twitter and Facebook has

resulted in a dramatic transformation in the news media industry, significantly impacting

journalist's professional responsibilities, how information is disseminated, news

gathering, and journalist's relationship with the public.[16] As a result, new media is

changing the responsibilities of reporters in the newspaper, radio and television

industries. Literary research in the area of new and social media's impact and journalist

requirements is relatively new with past studies "often focused on the coming together

of previously separate print, broadcast, and online news organizations" known as full

convergence.[17] Just as convergence and new media revolutionized the news industry,

incorporating social media throughout all areas of a news media organization has

transformed the news gathering process, an even more striking transformation has taken place in newsrooms around the world in the use of social media tools.

TEKGROUP International published their second annual Social Media News Survey in May 2011. The survey specifically targeted news media personnel and their measured acceptance, use, and attitudes of social media tools to follow, share, and post news and information.[18] Although the use of Twitter for gathering news and information in the adult civilian population is relatively low at 15 percent, there is a startling difference in use of Twitter and Facebook amongst news media professionals. More than 90 percent of personnel surveyed cite the use of Twitter and 85 percent the use of Facebook as a primary source of news and information when following, sharing or posting - roughly twice that of NYT.com.[19]

The survey indicates a dramatic shift in numbers of journalists who use social media as a primary function in performing their jobs for both news gathering and distributing information amongst social media sites, Specifically, Twitter (90 percent) and Facebook (86 percent) were identified as the preferred social media news sources among media professionals. This fact was underscored during the devastating earthquake and subsequent tsunami off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku, Japan in March 11, 2011. After the disaster struck, Twitter (30 percent) edged out television (27 percent) for the first time as the identified source of initial awareness of a major international event. Sixty percent of those surveyed frequently use social media for following or monitoring news and information, and almost one quarter of those stated that they use social media exclusively for this task. Another first for social media was achieved when both

Twitter (61 percent) and Facebook (55 percent) bettered word-of-mouth (49 percent) as the method of choice for spreading the news of the devastation.[20]

Reporters also provided countless examples of how monitoring social media is now standard operating procedure. After checking emails, social media sites were often the first "place" reporters visited prior to editorial meetings. Stories that are "trending" or quickly gaining a large audience or going "viral" on social media will often jump in priority in the line-up of stories to air.[21]

More importantly, the unanticipated change in behavior identified was the increased use of Twitter and Facebook to follow breaking news stories with more than 65 percent citing the use of social media for this purpose. More than half of respondents reported having a preference for fact checking through social media. Nearly 75 percent of the survey sample indicated they sometimes or frequently visit a corporate website after learning of a news story through social media channels.[22] Journalists are also using Twitter and Facebook to verify tips on social media sites, track down sources through online platforms, and engage in an interactive relationship with their audience.

Beyond simple fact-checking and the verification of sources, the study also identified a significant jump in the percent of the population of news professionals that now rely on social media for news gathering. Eighty four percent of media professionals indicate that they frequently (62 percent) or exclusively (22 percent) use social media to follow or monitor news and information. Timeliness of social media was a distinct advantage for media professionals with 26 percent indicating that news gathered through social media sources was more timely (45 percent) than traditional news outlets.

Perhaps the most significant change is that new media has broken down traditional roles and barriers between print and video journalists. Previously there was a distinct separation between both the culture and product of print and broadcast journalism, yet now both are required to work in both mediums in order to generate web and social media content. Some of the most common tasks contemporary journalists are required to perform include writing summary stories, shooting videos, taking photos, updating web content, conducting question and answer sessions with viewers, and posting content to multiplatform social media sites.[23] The term "multimedia journalists" is used in trade publications such as TVjobs.com and Medialine.com- the online source for media news and television employment, to describe this new multifunctional journalist.

In the past, television broadcast crews typically consisted of two to four person teams, with a minimum of a videographer, and reporter. For major network or international news programs, such as ABC or BBC, a crew would also usually include a producer and sound technician. Technology advancements in digital video cameras and editing suites have reduced equipment size to small enough to fit into a backpack. Today, television journalists are morphing into "one-man-shows" or "backpack journalists". These do-it-all journalists shoot, edit, and disseminate their own video reports via Internet and satellite connections. Although these smaller systems produce poorer quality video product, they provide flexibility and represent a tremendous cost savings for a news organization.[24]

Winning modern conflicts is as much dependent on carrying domestic and international public opinion as it is on defeating the adversary. As part of a democratic government, America's military requires public support to sustain its operations. The

media has the capacity to define and influence the perception and realities of people around the globe that can have national and international implications. It serves as an eye witness to America's most trusted public institution and important national asset-- its' military.

Integral to this process, Commanders have a responsibility and an obligation to keep the American public informed about their nation's military. Open communication enhances morale and readiness and increases public trust and support. Through active engagement the military gains and maintains public support for military operations, demonstrates it is a responsible steward of national resources and treasure. Timely information also counters adversary propaganda and disinformation by providing a continuous flow of credible, reliable, timely, and accurate information to military members, their families, the media and the public. With the backing from the public and Congress, military leaders are able to recruit, equip, and train military forces to perform across the full range of military operations.[25] Effective public affairs and timely and accurate communications supports a strong national defense by building trust, confidence and understanding for the military's contribution to national security.

Media interaction has long been a part of the landscape in which the military operates, and will remain inevitable, indispensable and of mutual importance. The Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 was the first foreign war to be covered extensively by U.S. correspondents[26] and journalists have been reporting on our troops in every operation since, including the American Civil War, both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Balkans, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations over Libya. Beyond war, the international media

has broadcast stories and images to the world of U.S. military personnel providing aid to those in desperate need in the devastating aftermath of catastrophic natural disasters. From coverage of a small town Memorial Day Parade supported by local National Guard troops to news clips of the daily decisions being made at the Pentagon.

While each Service has its own Public Affairs Staff Directorate, public affairs is a joint staff function. Doctrinally for training and operational purposes, it falls under the Department of Defense (DoD), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The mission of joint public affairs is to communicate truthful and factual unclassified information about DoD activities to U.S., allied, national, international and internal audiences. The relationship between the media and the military has its ingrained tensions, but it is still the most effective means to communicate our message to our audiences. Journalists are perceived as arbiters of truthful information and Americans rely on the media to provide information about military. In working with the media, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Ray Odierno has said that the Army must continue to reach out to the media.

"We're going to engage and outreach with you and have a relationship with you here, overseas, during training events, no matter where it is, during tough problems and good problems," he said. "We're going to build a relationship and work together to get you the right facts so your stories are reported accurate, important and cutting-edge."[27] In any future operation the Army will be engaged, whether partnership building exercises, humanitarian assistance or an operational conflict, it should expect regular encounters with international media who show up in these operating areas. The reporter on the ground covering a developing situation before the military arrives, and with a unit

until the last troop has departed, will likely be a freelance or local national reporter globally connected via cell phone and will be the primary means of coverage for those military operations. And that media coverage has the potential to a large extent, to shape the public perceptions of the nature of the security environment and that of the military for years to come.

In February 2010, the Department of Defense (DOD) officially recognized the value of social media as a tool for strategic communication, when William J. Lynn III, then U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, released Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 09-026 – Responsible and Effective Use of Internet Capabilities authorizing access to, and the use of social media networks on government computers providing guidelines for military use of social media and acknowledged "that Internet-based capabilities are integral to operations across the Department of Defense". The directive made specific mention of its primary applicability to units and organizations establishing external official presence (social media) and specifically identifies Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and blogs.[28] On September 11, 2012, the Department of Defense Instruction for Internet-based Capabilities replaced DTM 09-026, expanding the scope of the DTM and allowing the military to continue using social media until a permanent policy is established.[29] There remain many inconsistencies in regards to social media throughout the Department of Defense - to a total absence of any current doctrinal publications, to various sustained web based presence such as the DOD Social Media Hub.[30] For example, Joint Pub 1-02, the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, amended as recently as July 2011, fails to include any mention of social media, while Joint Pub3 -13, *Information Operations*, which states that its goal is

13

"to achieve and maintain information superiority for the U.S. and it allies", similarly fails to address the subject of social media.[31]

From the Service standpoint, the Army has been the most progressive in the development of a social media program, with a dedicated Online and Social Media Division within the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. The most current edition of The United States Army Social Media Handbook, Version 3.1, to assist in standardizing and educating its people, was published in January 2013.[32] The handbook contains chapters on social media subjects including security, establishing an official social media presence, polices, standards, reference guides, resources, blogging, case studies, and Facebook and Twitter reference guides. In the introduction page of the handbook, Brigadier General Gary Volesky, the current Chief of Army Public Affairs, discusses the importance of how effectively social media can be used to distribute information during times of crisis such as Hurricane Sandy. He also stresses "In today's information environment, when news breaks, one of the first places people turn to is social media. As Army communicators, we must utilize social media platforms to report the most accurate and up-to-date information."[33] However, The Army's social media program is still largely focused on the purely communicative aspects of social media and has yet to grasp the full impact of how social media has revolutionized the news industry, information environment, and the multi-faceted nature of social media. The Army is using social media but ineffectively. The Army Public Affairs Social Media Office has over 10,000 Facebook accounts registered. While unit and spouses Facebook pages can host a wealth of information, using an interactive site basically to post information for a unit's internal audience is not an efficient use of the medium. Today's audiences

are becoming accustomed to being part of the conversation and like reporters, the Army should be using social media in its outreach efforts to connect with its audiences and develop relationships.

While the news industry adapted to, and continues to evolve to meet the demands of the changing information environment and is embracing social media as a critical tool for journalism, the Army has yet to comprehend how this fundamental shift in the information environment impacts its communication operations. And like the news industry, it needs to modernize its communications business - Army Public Affairs - to meet the demands of an internet based, social media driven information environment. A journalist sitting in Islamabad typing a story on a laptop can impact a consumer in Big Sky, Montana. An Army public affairs professional should be able to do the same thing. However this requires a shift in culture that will only come through education.

The Army needs to train its public affairs officers, and leaders, both commissioned and noncommissioned, to understand today's information environment, how the media profession has changed, and the resources necessary for public affairs professionals to function in this new Internet-based, social media driven environment. Senior leaders need to foster a climate of engagement for their subordinates, particularly in mediums that are effective in reaching the digital demographic. Without significant changes or its own "sea change" in Army Public Affairs training and doctrine, the Army's continued culture of engagement is in jeopardy.

Army officers entering the service are expected to master the necessary skills required of all military officers in the complex art and science of war fighting through rigorous courses and training. In addition, they must become fully proficient in the

performance of a functional specialty leaving little room for non-critical tasks. These specialty courses vary in length from six months to a year. That officer could then have an immediate follow-on specialty skills training course lasting two weeks to a year, depending on the specialization level. Upon arriving at a unit, a new lieutenant likely will have fellow officers and noncommissioned officers in the same career field, within the unit to help teach and reinforce the fundamentals of what was learned in school and training assist in professional development. Between the fourth and sixth year of service, officers attend The Advanced Qualification Course for career field specific training, again lasting in duration six months to a year in service.

In contrast, the public affairs officer basic qualification course (PAOQC) for all military services is 46 days in length. The PAOQC is the only required public affairs specific training for a public affairs officer for their entire career. It is a joint school, with active, civilian, reserve component, Army National Guard, and International officers attending. Public affairs officers have no mandatory advanced career course like all basic branch officers. Unlike other densely populated career fields such as infantry or quartermaster, there may be only one public affairs officer in a unit without the benefit of career field development. Army Public Affairs officers, who meet specific qualifications, also have had the opportunity to compete for slots to attend, five Training with Industry opportunities, (one being with Google), and also compete to attend a resident graduate program studying communications at Georgetown University. However, due to sequestration budget cuts, both of these programs have been put on hold through fiscal year 2014.[34]

The Public Affairs Qualification Course (PAQC) provides those new to the public affairs field, the fundamentals of public affairs to include theory and doctrine, how to conduct public affairs operations in support of the command's mission, community relations, internal communications, military-media relations, media engagement, and planning. Additionally, students are taught the fundamentals of news, journalism, and writing and copy-editing in accordance with the Associated Press (AP) Styleguide. PAOQC journalism courses teach the basic foundational knowledge of effective verbal and written communication. At the end of the course, students should be able to write, deliver and prepare a speech manuscript for a military spokesperson with high-quality journalism skills, review basic English/grammar, write initial and follow-up press releases, news features, editorials (OPED), letters to the editor, write and review headlines, a general news story, and edit and review a public service announcement.

The Army expects its public affairs officers and senior leaders to maintain a unit website and Facebook page and encourages the use of social media. No journalism instruction exists for effective web writing or tweeting, but the curriculum still includes newspaper layout. Any Army installation newspapers remaining in circulation are privately contracted staffed by non-military civilians. With website articles now a daily responsibility, reporters must be become skilled at writing for both the internet and print and think it is two totally different ways of writing. For stories online journalists have to write even more carefully to ensure the information feels new because consumers are always looking for updates. The brevity of a tweet−a limit of 140 characters, combined with the impact of real-time dissemination, presents a challenge that also requires a new way of thinking about how to write and frame information.[35]

The current Program of Instruction for the course, signed in 2009, does not include any new or social media training. However, the current commandant incorporated 10 hours into the curriculum dedicated to Internet-based and social media training covering topics that include guidelines for practical use, operational security, and analytics. Students range from not having used social media while others have varying skills dependent on personal experience therefore instructors must teach to a medium application level to reach all students.[36] With only ten hours available, there is no instruction on the current information environment, how social media is impacting the news media industry, incorporating social media into public affairs planning and communication strategies, conducting an interview via online podcasts, practical application of posting a blog, etc..

Army public affairs personnel are not trained to be multifunctional or multi-media capable. Army public affairs is still organized by old newsroom configuration of print and broadcast divisions and trains its Soldiers to be either print or broadcast journalists. A basic public affairs specialist will learn basic photography and how to write cutlines (the caption found under a photo), according to the AP Styleguide, but not have any instruction on shooting video. Broadcasters/videographers aren't taught how to write cutlines or any basic journalism products such as a press release. This severely limits a public affairs section that may only have one print and one broadcast journalist assigned, especially if one is absent or the unit deploys. Public affairs sections don't have the luxury of having a person who is only trained in one skill set.

Leaders need to solve problems and may not always see public affairs officers as part of the solution because both are inadequately trained to operate in today's

information environment. Without the requisite skills and knowledge about today's social media driven information environment and what are necessary resources for public affairs practitioners to effectively and efficiently operate in their professional environment, leaders cannot be expected to understand, support and mentor their public affairs operators. Currently there are no public affairs training opportunities for Army's officer basic, advanced, or board selected continuing education Intermediate Leader Education (ILE). At the Senior Service Colleges, the curriculum has a three hour block of instruction focusing on communication synchronization (formerly strategic communication) and the strategic effects of public affairs and information operations. At the Army War College, the content for communication instruction varies by seminar. In my seminar the instruction was student taught, by the author, a public affairs officer. Given there are only three public affairs officers attending this class, if the other seminars also chose to student teach this block of instruction, the remaining 21 seminars were taught communications by a non-communicator. The War College also integrated media training into exercises throughout the year but those opportunities were limited to only 13 percent of students.

Currently, there are only two public affairs formal training opportunities available to Army senior leaders; the classes are given by the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs at the pre-command course and Brigadier General Executive Training Program (Capstone). The executive training session focuses on successful interaction with the media. Social media content consists of reviewing the officer's social media presence if there is one (review of a Facebook page), and a ten minute power point presentation on social media presented by the Chief of the Online and Social Media Division. During the

training for the pre-command course, ten minutes is dedicated to social media and mostly focuses on family support group and unit Facebook pages. During his presentation there is no discussion on how the news media uses social media, how the public consumes information through social media, the evolution of the news industry in the past ten years and how the Army must be effective in leveraging social media or risk losing the information war.[37] However, due to TDY cuts as a result of sequestration, the social media portion of the CAPSTONE training has been cancelled until further notice.

Public Affairs became a Career Functional Designate or full time career field in 2000. There has been little or no change to the process of funding and authorizations to adequately equip public affairs organizations throughout the Army. Although the Army authorized public affairs organizations at the Brigade level and higher in 2003, there is still no public affairs equipment authorized on a unit TOE, so currently all funding for public affairs organizations comes out of Overseas Contingency Operational (OCO) Funds for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Once these OCO funds are closed, there is no source of funding, and all public affairs equipment and all maintenance and repair costs will be an unfunded requirement. Under the OCO funding umbrella, funding authorization is the responsibility of the Commander to which the public affairs staff falls under. According to the Headquarters, Department of the Army, G-3/5/7, pending the establishment of a centralized fielding program, "Any purchase of new or replacement equipment is the responsibility of the command to which the Public affairs unit or section is assigned to or supports."[38] To be managed correctly, all public affairs equipment, including digital media equipment should be centrally procured and life cycle managed by a designated Project of Memorandum (POM) manager. This will relieve public affairs

units and sections from the burden of convincing their commands for example, that yes, broadcast public affairs Soldiers do require digital video equipment and a camera even though it's not on the current MTOE.

In order to ensure uniformity in equipment fielding, the Army Public Affairs Center (APAC) has developed a standardized list of approved off-the-shelf products that can be purchased by a unit commander. These digital media kits for photo and video acquisition and processing are procured as turn-key systems from Defense Logistics Agency. This is a system-only procurement and not a catalog of items that are individually selected by units. The kits are entirely COTS and therefore maintaining a static item list is near impossible as technology constantly improves and systems are upgraded. Units that desire individual components rather than complete systems must work that through the standard local purchase procedures.[39]

Currently, there is no public affairs specific authorization to purchase commercial mobile "smart" devices (iPhone, iPad). There is no specific prohibition on commanders using unit funds to procure commercial mobile devices either. The Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) has approved the Apple iPhone and iPad as an authorized commercial mobile device for purchase per the Unified Capabilities Requirements.[40] The APAC continues to engage Headquarters, Department of the Army, Command Information Operations, IO-G6, on the procurement of Smart" technology such as iPads, iPhones, and tablets not included in the standardized equipment lists. A vigorous debate is ongoing on allowing access of such devices onto government networks. Until this is resolved, in order to engage with social media on a timely basis, public affairs

practitioners must use their personal "smart" phones and devices and devise time consuming work-around solutions to accomplish their mission.

An example of this is the Army public affairs coverage of the 57th Presidential Inauguration ceremonies in January. The Joint Task Force-National Capital Region (JTF-NCR) public affairs office does not have government issued smart phones, iPhones or iPads for mobile social media product posting to the non-secure LAN, which hosts the JTF website, homepage and social media sites. The JTF public affairs officer was given the mission to provide real-time coverage and continuous updates to the organization's website and Facebook page throughout all ceremonies. In order to accomplish her mission, the public affairs officer had to use her personal iPhone and ask for volunteers from her contracted staff to use their personal phones and time from personal data usage plans to cover the event. Since the staff was temporary contractors, they did not have administration rights to the Facebook page. Volunteers from the staff posted photos and video of inauguration events to their personal Facebook pages. The staff then had to pull the posts from employee's private Facebook page and post them onto the unit's Inauguration Facebook page which required double work and at least twice as much time to accomplish the mission.[41]

Forty six days of training is not enough time to adequately train public affairs professionals the basics of their craft much less preparing one to understand the geopolitical impact of social media's role in the downfall of a government during the Arab Spring. The Public Affairs Officer Qualification Course needs to be expanded to meet the professional training timeline standards of all Army basic officer qualification courses of a minimum of six months. The curriculum should be revised with social

media training integrated into every area of training including awareness of social media's impact on the news industry and information environment, social media in deliberate planning process, journalism, media engagement, internal and external communications. Every public affairs officer that meets requirements for promotion to the rank of major should be required to attend graduate school or a Training with Industry program, with the addition of academic fellowships to think-tank and graduate schools emphasizing strategic studies and/or communication to develop the cadre of public affairs experts needed at the most senior levels of the military.

With the trend in the media industry shifting to multi-functional journalists, Army Public Affairs should train its personnel to be multi-purpose/multi-media capable to effectively engage in today's information environment. Like today's contemporary journalists, both print and broadcast journalists should be required to work in both mediums in order to generate web and social media content. Both should be able to perform the most common tasks include writing summary stories, shooting videos, taking photos, updating web content, and posting content to multiplatform social media sites Understanding, however that a shift to converge print and video to multimedia may come at the expense of having Soldiers do more things less well. That may not matter if the goal is basic competence rather than excellence. The Army needs to conduct an honest analysis of what is required in terms of information product content and quality as well as consideration of the primary consumers of that content and what are their expectations. High production quality of video and photos matters less in the social media realm. Today's digital cameras produce very high quality products that meet quality standards for all print mediums and are more than adequate for social media

content. Some analysis of what content has been delivered to what media outlets or other entities via DVIDS are in order. What content is most desired, valuable and more importantly used by public affairs consumers? Those answers should drive the capability requirements of the public affairs Soldier and staff.

Mr. Robert Hastings Jr., former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, suggests a deeper institutional change is needed in the Army's approach to training its leaders in all aspects of public affairs and communications operations. He stated commanders need to be given the breadth and depth of understanding to operate in the information realm. Hastings went on to say communication instruction for officers should be given from accession into the military and reinforced at every level of institutional education throughout an officer's career as well as incorporated into training. He pointed out that all officers, regardless of specialty, are taught the value and necessity of planning for enabling functions, such as logistics or signal support, without which military operations fail. Communication and public affairs are as critical, particularly for today's counter-insurgency operations, yet are not thoroughly taught.[42]

Army senior leaders must take Army Public Affairs funding requirements seriously and recognize the need for an approved Program of Management (POM) for Army Public Affairs. Previous requests submitted for MTOE changes for equipment funding and management during the past ten years were not supported because deploying units could request funding through an Operational Needs Statement process which was funded through OCO funds.[43] APAC has submitted its latest draft POM for 2015 which, if approved, will finally ensure new Line Item Numbers will be established and documented, system integration will be maintained, all public affairs digital media

equipment will be net-worthy and allowed (required) to operate on the Army networks; and technology upgrades/modernization will be centrally managed. The Army should approve the POM request for 2015 submitted by APAC to ensure that Army Public Affairs is an officially source, centrally managed, Program of Record for funding.

For over a decade, public affairs professionals have been doing a tremendous job of keeping America's support for the Army strong throughout a prolonged period of conflict, even while some may not favor the nation's involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Public affairs officers are successful by hard work and coincidence, not by training or design. They are successful because they have had to apply ad-hoc experience and the ability to create workaround solutions to problems and quickly adapt to any situation. During the past decade of conflict, almost all active, reserve and National Guard public affairs Soldiers have deployed to a combat theater at least once and for many, numerous times. Throughout the years of deployments, the Army public affairs community experienced and applied lessons learned while the school house training program remained stagnant. Social media is a blatant reminder of how the information environment has changed. If public affairs practitioners cannot manage social media, how can they be expected to effectively manage communications operations in the operational environment? It is time to overhaul the Defense Information School curriculum and the public affairs officer development program in order to incorporate the hard-earned lessons of proactive public affairs practices and culture into the institutional training base.

Endnotes

[1] Author is an Army officer with 21 years of service, 11 as a public affairs officer. The observations provided are based upon her experiences of developing and implementing the

DoD Media Embed Program and facilitating hundreds of television crews while deployed as the 4th Infantry Division PAO.

    [2] Elana Zak, "Innovative Move? BBC Develops iPhone App for Field Reporters," 10,000 Words, Where journalism and technology meet, June 14, 2011, http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/bbc-develops-iphone-app-for-field-reporters_b4702, (accessed April 2, 2013).

    [3] Shea Bennett, "Just How Big is Twitter in 2012?" All Twitter, The Unofficial Twitter Resource, February 23, 2012 http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/twitter-statistics-2012_b18914, (accessed February 27, 2012).

    [4] American, British, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Armies' Program Report Number 185, Social Media Engagement, March 20, 2013.

    [5] Robert M. Gates, "Landon Lecture", (Manhattan: Kansas State University, November 26, 2007, www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199 (accessed March18, 2013).

    [6] Phillip Hodgetts, "How has technology changed news reporting?" Business & Marketing Media Consumption: The present and future of post production business and technology, July 31, 2009, http://www.philiphodgetts.com/2009/07/how-has-technology-changed-news-reporting/, (accessed April 3, 2013).

    [7] Frontline, Tehran Bureau, An independent source of news on Iran and the Iranian Diaspora, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/us/, (accessed March 25, 2013).

    [8] Internet World Stats, Usage and Population Statistics, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed February 27, 2013).

    [9] Internet World Stats, Usage and Population Statistics, http://www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm (accessed February 27, 2012).5. U.S.

    [10] Aaron Smith, Joanna Brenner, "Twitter Use – 2012," Report Social Networking, a project of the Pew Research Center, Pew Internet and American Life Project, http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Twitter-Use-2012.aspx. (accessed February 16, 2012).

    [11] Ibid.

    [12] Hodgetts, "How has technology changed news reporting?", 2.

    [13] Kristen Purcell, "How mobile devices are changing community information environments," Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, the State of News Media 2011, March 14, 2011, http://stateofthemedia.org/2011/mobile-survey/,(accessed January 10, 2013).

    [14] Simon Cottle, "From BBC Newsroom to BBC News centre; On Changing Technology and Journalist Practices". Convergence: *The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 1999. http://con.sagepub.com/content/5/3/22/, (accessed February 16, 2013).

[15] Drucker, P.F., Managing in a Time of Great Change. (New York: Truman Talley Books/Plume 1995) 46.

[16] Anthony C. Adornato, "A Digital Juggling Act: A case study of new media's impact on the responsibilities of local television reporters." University of Missouri-Columbia, May 2012, in ProQuest, (accessed February 21, 2013).

[17] Cottle, "From BBC Newsroom to BBC News Centre; On Changing Technology and Journalist Practices", 23.

[18] TEKGROUP, ™Market Your Message, "Social Media News Survey", May 2011, http://www.tekgroup.com, (accessed March 1, 2013).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 6.

[21] Ardornato, "A Digital Juggling Act," 45.

[22] TEKGROUP, "Market Your Message," 3.

[23] Laura K. Smith, Andrea H.Tanner, & Sonya Forte Duhé, "Convergence Concerns in Local Television: Conflicting Views from the Newsroom". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, (2007): 562.

[24] Ardornato, "A Digital Juggling Act," 41.

[25] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Public Affairs*, Joint Publication JP 3-61, (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 May 2007), vii-xi.

[26] Tom Reilly, Newspapers: U.S. Press, "From The United States and Mexico at War,", March, 14, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/war/us_press.html, (accessed 18 January 2013).

[27] David Vergun, Army News Service, "Odierno Shares Views on Military's Relationship With Media", Oct. 22, 2012, http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=118282, (accessed April 4, 2013).

[28] William G. Lynn III, "Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 09-026 – Responsible and Effective Use of Internet-based Capabilities," *Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments*, January 25, 2011, 2.

[29] Department of Defense, Department of Defense Instruction 855001: DoD Internet Service and Internet-Based Capabilities,", September 11, 2013, http://www.slideshare.net/USArmySocialMedia/dod-internet-service-and-internetbased-capabiliteis-dodd-855001, (accessed January 2, 2013).

[30] Department of Defense, "DoD Social Media Hub," http://www.defense.gov/socialmedia/, (accessed January 30, 2013). http://www.slideshare.net/USArmySocialMedia/dod-internet-service-and-internetbased-capabiliteis-dodd-855001, (accessed January 30, 2013.)

[31] Thomas, T.R., Colonel, "Social Media,: More Than Just a Communications Medium". Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 2012), 5.

[32] U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, *The United States Army Social Media Handbook*, Version 3.1, January 2013, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Online and Social Media Division, 2013), III

[33] U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, "Letter from the Chief of Public Affairs," *The United States Army Social Media Handbook*, Version 3.1, January 2013, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Online and Social Media Division, 2013), III

[34] Interview with confidential source, March 30, 2013.

[35] Ardornato, "A Digital Juggling Act," 53.

[36] COL Jeremy Martin, U.S. Army, Commandant, Defense Information School, Fort George Meade, Maryland, telephone interview by author, March 21, 2013.

[37] LTC Vinton Porter, U.S. Army, Chief, Army Public Affairs Online and Social Media Division, telephone interview by author, March 6, 2013.

[38] Kenneth Clauson, Chief, Materiel Division, Army Public Affairs Center, Fort George Meade, Maryland, interview by author, March 5, 2013.

[39] U.S. Department of the Army, Army Public Affairs Center "Guidance for Purchase and Documentation of Digital Media (photo/video) Systems", , Memorandum for all Public Affairs Personnel and Unit Resource Managers, Fort George Meade, Maryland, September 5, 2012.

[40] U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Information Systems Agency, Memorandum for Distribution, "DoD Unified Capabilities (UC) Approved Products List (APL) approval of the Apple, Inc. iPad 2iOS5.O.l.1 and iPad iOS5.1 Tracking Number (TN) 1204802 as a non-enterprise activated Commercial Mobile Device (CMD) as defined by the DoD Chief Information Officer (CIO) CMD Interim Policy/Multifunction Mobile Device (MMD) per the Unified Capabilities Requirements (UCR) 2008 Changes 3", https://aplits.disa.mil (accessed March 5, 2013).

[41] COL Michelle Roberts, U.S. Army, Director Public Affairs, Joint Task Force National Capital Region, interview by author, February 9, 2013.

[42] Rumi Nielson-Green, Colonel, "Fighting the Information War but Losing Credibility: What Can Be Done?" *Military Review* 91, no.4, (July-August, 2011): 7.

[43] COL Richard Patterson, U.S. Army, Director, U.S. Army Public Affairs Center, Fort George Meade, Maryland, interview conducted by author, March 18, 2013.